

## BOY'S CAMP MORNING DEVOTIONS 2015

### Spiritual survival skills

Reading: 1 Chron 11.9-19

#### TUESDAY (v9,10 & 15,17)

The men in our reading had significant skills. Survival skills are very useful in life. No doubt, amongst other things, David and his band of men knew a lot about wilderness survival (especially from his days as a shepherd). But he wasn't foolish enough to just think about physical survival, he was an intensely spiritual man. What do I mean by that? Not that he had his head in the clouds or was an over sensitive or emotional man. He was rough hewn and intensely practical as well as being a poet and a musician. But being spiritual is something not from below, not earthly, but given from God. From God to man, it always comes in that direction. This goes to the heart of what it means to be a Christian. What is the definition of a Christian? A good definition is this- It is the saving work of God in the heart of a man. Yes it involves a request from that person in prayer, nevertheless it is all a free work of grace. What causes that person to pray like that when millions don't bother? It is God, and what He starts he'll finish.

So David was one of these specific ones - spiritually alive- what has come to be known as 'a Christian', because of the One he called 'my Lord' the 'Messiah'. Now David was a soldier, and as we've mentioned he had survival skills. There is a popular book written by a man from this country's Special Forces (commonly thought to be the best) the SAS, a regiment of the British army. SAS stands for the Special Air Service. They have this book - the SAS survival handbook. It tells you all their skills. It's got a section on 'facing disaster'. It talks of the basic needs of a person in a survival situation - FOOD, FIRE, SHELTER and WATER. These need to be prioritized; for example, in the desert, shelter is essential. If you don't have shelter in the desert having 2 litres of water is of little use in the long term. That's why David and his men were in the cave. Christ is the Christian's shelter, the Rock cleft for us. Water flowed from that rock in the wilderness in Moses' day and water is also essential for life, we don't realize so much at home until you're without it. It takes 3 weeks to die without food but 3 days without water! Now we're not here to teach you physical survival skills but spiritual. David longed for water (v17) but more so he longed for his spiritual home. He had tasted the spiritual water of life (the living water Christ spoke of) for he knew this was vital. We'll find out more tomorrow.

#### WEDNESDAY (12-14)

Yesterday we heard it takes 3 days to die without water. But it takes 3 minutes to die without something else - Air! The 'breath of life' that's what every Christian is brought to life with spiritually. We need spiritual resuscitation and heart massage! The Christian lives and breathes spiritually, it's as if he inhales the word of God and exhales in prayer. These Christians are the particular of all people. In Esther it says of them "There is a people whose customs are different from those of all other people". These are the spiritually alive and aware, those in the battle, the

Christian soldier. Why a battle? Why a soldier like one of David's mighty men? Because he's in a war. Because he has a Captain, a King. Because he realizes there's a fight against enemies. The non-Christian isn't aware of any of this. Sin is mostly a friend to him. The non-Christian is captive, the Christian is free. You could say the non-Christian is seduced, even sedated. Drugged into a stupor by the tactics of the Enemy, hardly breathing. The problem is, he is a willing captive! This is true of all men before they know God, nevertheless, some have their eyes opened. Some respond to the call. Some have their ears opened and hear the message to flee the wrath to come. They face the 'disaster of the soul' and they survive. This is the work of God. He rescues such, Christ is the Captain who comes and saves them.

In the SAS handbook it talks about pain, it says "pain is there to protect and stop you using an injured part of the body, but it is rarely fatal in itself and sometimes must be blocked out". Spiritually, pain is linked to sin. It came into the world because of sin. Sin causes pain - often emotional, always in conscience to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore we are not surprised to find that the great remedy from God for sin - the cross of Calvary - was a place of ultimate pain. You could say Christ was the king of pain. Physical, yes, spiritual, much more so. What are some poetic pictures that have been used of a soul racked by pain- a flag being ragged and the wind won't stop, a fossil trapped in a high cliff wall, a butterfly trapped in a spiders web, a fox torn by a huntsman's pack or a dove with a broken back. This may convey a poetic illustration of some of the spiritual anguish of a man's soul, but it's impossible to intrude too much at all into the sufferings of Christ's soul. He suffered like no man ever could. He took the pain, the shame, for those who would see through this empty lost world and see Him as their Substitute, their Saviour. He's the only man who death did not conquer. He's the ultimate Survivor, he's the King, the soldier's Captain, David's Lord.

#### THURSDAY (9-11)

Spiritual special forces is what we've been considering - SAS *spiritual* air service! What's our survival manual? The Bible. What does it tell us? Amongst other things, the essentials of Spiritual Survival;

##### 1) KNOW YOUR SITUATION

Man is lost, fallen from a right relationship with God. Therefore we are separated from God, estranged and an offence to Him. The pain of conscience will warn you. What is the solution? There is no other solution than the salvation offered in Christ, for He lived a perfect life and died a sacrificial death in order to take our place of punishment and offer His own righteousness in our place if we are to turn to Him and believe in Him as our Lord. This brings us to our second essential;

##### 2) KNOW YOUR SAVIOUR

There is no other way, no other Saviour than Christ Jesus. Kneel at His feet and only plead His merits and see if He doesn't lift you up and put breath in your body. Send out that spiritual S.O.S - Save Our Souls, or rather an SMS Save My Soul.

##### 3)KNOW YOUR ENEMY

The enemy is threefold; The world, the flesh and the Devil. (explain briefly)

The worldling has already lost the battle, and loses a little more each day. He resists the Holy Spirit like a prisoner of war or a lost wanderer resisting a rescue! Instead this person does as he is tempted and doesn't resist this at all. Without Jesus Christ he is a hopeless case, senseless, but with Christ there is always hope. What foolish creatures we are, suspicious of our rescue but quick to trust and embrace the worst dangers of life!

The Christian has spiritual senses, and will sense the danger and seek out God's word as his guide. It is his food, his intelligence on the enemy, his orders. Some battles he'll lose, but you can lose a battle but win the war in the end. The old saying goes 'there's many a slip betwixt cup and lip' meaning, there's many a twist and turn in life before you get to your destination, and, in that sense, they'll be more wins than loses for the believer before he gets to heaven. Ultimately Christ will bring you home to heaven and perfect you, but before then you must fight. We'll hear more about what this involves tomorrow.

#### FRIDAY (15-16)

Yesterday we heard a few essentials of spiritual survival. 1. Know your situation 2. Know your Saviour 3. Know your Enemy. David's men separated themselves from the enemies of David and stood by and for their king in the battle. In life there are sides to be taken. Where do you stand, with God or the enemy of souls? These men weren't deceived, they were on the right side of the war. Here's another essential for spiritual survival-

#### 4) STRIVE FOR HOLINESS

Only the Christian can do this. There's no use trying this as a non-believer, this is why number 1 and 2 comes before number 4. Leviticus 11.45 says "For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." What is holiness? It is moral perfection, the separation from sin. The Christian is in a process of becoming more and more holy, he is in a battle against the old nature. Holiness is like a person's spiritual state of health. The more healthy the more physically able. In the same way, the more holy then the more able to do works of righteousness and to resist temptation. For example, you may be tempted to sin, but it may be a subtle deception, wrong presented as right. The tempter may say "come to this place, do that (wrong) thing, only an infantile superstition of the human spirit would consider not to do so a virtue, it's the barrier that separates ignorance from knowledge". Well, this is worldly wisdom, and the worldling will fall for it every time, but the believer won't be taken in by it. The nonbeliever will see it as 'good', even as the words of an angel! Unfortunately they *are* the words of an angel, a *fallen* one! Look, doesn't it sound remarkably similar to this "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day he eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" Gen 3.4-5. With this all man was deceived. Knowledge is desirable, but who would want to know sorrow, pain, suffering and sin (evil). We weren't meant to, God commanded us for our own good. The fruit of that tree has given us sin, pain, suffering and anguish, and oh how we *know it!* Is that knowledge good? No, it has been evil. In one act our eyes have been opened to evil and shut to God!

#### SATURDAY(18,19)

We've seen some of the dangers to look out for for spiritual survival. The skilled Christian will see through the snares and traps of his enemies and do great exploits like these three mighty

men. He will seek purity and holiness. A man cannot be *too* holy. No man will ever get to heaven and regret being too holy in this life, the opposite shall be true. Not to say that holiness gets you to heaven, no, we say LIVE and then you'll be able to DO, not DO and then LIVE, it is grace not good works that saves a man. It is God's free gift of life that enables us. We are not saved by what we do, but we do *show* we are saved by what we do. The Christian knows the knowledge of evil is not to be desired but forgiveness from God and knowledge of His ways. He mistrusts the world and avoids its dangers if he's wise. He sticks close to the guide book and follows the trail- straight and narrow, frequently hard- he's a tracker and he tracks God. They'll be many dangers and snares but he'll overcome. These live to please their Saviour, their King. Look what the 3 mighty men were prepared to do for their king (v.17), they loved him and they denied themselves. David poured out the water to God because he knew he wasn't worthy, but Christ *is* worthy. If you don't believe it, go to the place called 'the skull', Golgotha, in your mind's eye and see the battle He won! The spiritual soldier will find strength from God in prayer, the word and worship.

The last of our essentials for spiritual survival is 5) KNOW YOUR BIBLE.

In the SAS survival manual a good blade is an essential tool. The Bible for the spiritual soldier is the double-edged sword dividing even between soul and spirit. Do you know how to use it? This is the last of our essentials for spiritual survival. Have you ever read Ephesians 6.10-18 The armour of God. That's your kit soldier! Use it, look after it, come to your senses, get some skills and, don't just survive, truly LIVE!